



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **THREE SPRINGFIELD RESIDENTS INDICTED FOR EBAY FRAUD CONSPIRACY**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that three Springfield, Mo., residents were indicted by a federal grand jury today for a conspiracy in which they defrauded businesses of merchandise then sold the merchandise over the on-line auction Web site eBay.

**Thomas Westwood**, 34, his wife **Jennifer Westwood**, 35, and **Kathleen Dodson**, 55, all of Springfield but formerly of Ozark, Mo., were charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield.

Today's indictment alleges that, from September 2003 to February 2004, the defendants participated in a conspiracy to defraud businesses and to transport stolen property across state lines.

According to the indictment, the defendants created false Universal Product Code (UPC) labels on a home computer. They allegedly traveled to retail stores and affixed the false UPC labels over the true UPC labels on retail merchandise, which caused the merchandise to scan at a lower price during checkout. This fraud, the indictment says, resulted in a loss of more than \$88,000 to those businesses.

After fraudulently purchasing the items, the defendants allegedly transported or shipped them across state lines to Missouri. They allegedly sold the items on Ebay. According to the indictment, the defendants then shipped the fraudulently-obtained merchandise across state lines to others and used the proceeds of those sales, in part, to purchase additional merchandise at a reduced price by using the false UPC labels.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury,

whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case was investigated by IRS-Criminal Investigation, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

[www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow/index.html)